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### American Top 40: The Countdown of the Century

by Rob Durkee

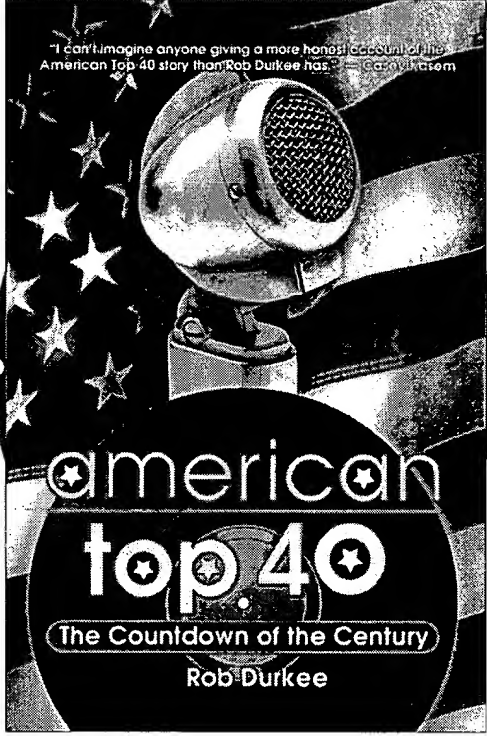
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American Top 40:  
The Countdown of the Century

*American Top 40*, the radio program co-founded in the 1950s by host Casey Kasem and producer Don Bustany, developed a winning formula of countdown and commentary that has influenced all the "top ten" hit shows since. Now, for the first time, the true behind-the-scenes story of the show's development and growth into the most popular radio show in the country is told through the people who made it happen.

The author traces the development of top-40 radio to *Your Hit Parade* and other early radio shows. He then shows how Kasem cleverly blended trivia, little-known facts, and compelling stories to give his listeners the "stories behind the songs" that they loved the most. Kasem's unique personality and presentation helped transform the way radio was programmed across the country—and had a huge impact on how hits were made and who became pop stars.

Pop radio began as a place where unique voices could share their musical enthusiasms, unhindered by big money or corporate influence. Yet, the very success of this hand-built business inspired more sinister developments. Corporate America saw a way to reach a new, and affluent, audience—teenagers—by sponsoring hit shows like *American Top 40*. And *American Top 40* could make or break careers—giving it enormous influence to establish stars. Kasem used this power judiciously, but others behind the scenes had their own agendas—and as *American Top 40* grew, these forces became more difficult to withstand.

(continued on back flap)

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L1	(auto\$8 with update\$6 with (playlist or (play near1 list) or (song near1 list) or (audio near1 list)))	1	L1

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**Casey Kasem** is one of the most listened-to and well recognized DJ's in the world. He hosts *America's Weekly Top 40* and *Top 20*, and is heard on more than 450 radio stations worldwide. Kasem is also the host of the daily feature *America Top Hits*'. He also plays the voice of cartoon characters such as Shaggy in the *Scooby Doo* series